



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
AIR NATIONAL GUARD

SG Log Letter 02-002

04 January 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR TAGS, WING/CC, SAS, MDS/CC, AES/CC

FROM: ANG/SG  
3500 Fetchet Avenue  
Andrews AFB, MD 20762-5157

SUBJECT: ANG Fitness Testing Program Changes

Annual fitness testing is undergoing reevaluation both in the Air Force and the Air National Guard. Regulatory guidance for fitness testing is developed by the Department of Defense and is implemented by each service.

“The military services shall develop and utilize fitness tests (PFTs) that evaluate cardiovascular and muscular endurance.” DoDI 1308.3

The traditional “walk-run” does not fulfill the intent of the DoD guidance. A three-mile timed walk is not a valid test of cardiac endurance. History has taught us that the mandated run results in predictable loss of life, unacceptable in the current medicolegal environment. Years ago, the Air Force Active Component transitioned to a cycle ergometry program, but the costs, manpower and equipment, as well as the time required to test each member made this test impractical for the traditional Guard/Reserve member. Furthermore, none of these tests evaluates muscular endurance.

Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom have focused attention on wartime deployment and delayed implementation of the Air Force “crunches & push-ups” testing program. Prior to the events of 11 September 2001, this office began beta-testing a program, which fulfills all of the DoD fitness testing requirements in a Guard-friendly, cost effective and time efficient mode. The program is an off-the-shelf product endorsed by the US Olympic Committee medical team and the YMCA. It employs the “step test”, the fitness standard developed by a generation of cardiologists, and the required crunches/push-ups. Each member will step up and down on a 12-inch step for three minutes and perform push-ups and crunches according to a prescribed protocol. Results, measured in terms of changes in pulse rate for the step test and number of push-ups/crunches within a prescribed time, are entered into web-based software for calculation, reporting and storage. ANG units that have tested the program gave it rave reviews.


Resolution of contracting issues and NGB/CF approval of the ANG Fitness Testing Program are anticipated by late Spring 2002. With annual fitness testing requirements based on the fiscal year, the program and implementation guidance should be fielded early enough for FY 2003 implementation. Scores for the entire exam will reflect an individual member's performance relative to his/her age-matched cohort. NO pass-fail criteria have been established at this time. The intent of the program is to incorporate all of the elements of HEALTH PROMOTIONS into one package. Physical fitness is one of the most critical health promotions issues for all military members. Fitness has been shown to decrease risk of injury and promote a healthier life-style.

EMPHASIZE: NO PASS/FAIL levels exist for push-ups and crunches at this time. ANG push ups/crunch requirements will mirror those of the Air Force (Reference SG Log Letter 01-019 attached) when fully implemented. NOW IS THE TIME TO START PRACTICING! Recommend commanders encourage personnel to start preparing for the push-ups and crunches, emphasizing proper technique, which can be done at anytime to include before or after the three-mile walk.

Until the new "step test" fitness testing program is implemented, ANG personnel are to be fit tested using the current timed three-mile walk (Ref SG Log Letter 01-019 attached).

This memorandum will expire two years from date of publication unless sooner rescinded or superceded.

My point of contact for questions related to fitness testing and health promotions is Colonel Sylvia Nye, ANG/SGO. She may be reached at DSN 278-8558 or via e-mail at [sylvia.nye@ang.af.mil](mailto:sylvia.nye@ang.af.mil).



RANDALL M. FALK, MD, MPH  
Colonel, USAF, MC, CFS  
The Air Surgeon  
Chief, Medical Services Directorate

Attachment:  
ANG/SG Log Letter 01-019



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Attachment 1

SG 01-019

23 March 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR WING/CC, MDS/CC, SAS, MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

FROM: ANG/SG  
3500 Fetchet Ave  
Andrews AFB, MD 20762-5157

SUBJECT: Air National Guard Fitness Testing Program

The Air National Guard (ANG) Fitness Testing Program is undergoing scrutiny and revolutionary change. Essentially, the current program does not meet standards established years ago by the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1308.3, Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedures. A HQ USAF/CC policy letter, dated 4 May 2000, now mandates annual evaluation of cardio-respiratory endurance/fitness and muscular strength. The policy letter is included in this package as Atch 1. The traditional walk-run does not meet the program standards prescribed by the Department of Defense. For those members who do not run regularly, an annual run greatly increases the risk of potentially fatal cardiac events. Although the three-mile brisk walk is good aerobic exercise, it does not provide a quantifiable measure of cardiac fitness. For these reasons and because of the new DoD requirement for muscular strength testing, ANG/SG is beta-testing an off-the-shelf fitness-testing program this year. It should prove to be a realistic, reliable, credible, and responsible fitness test, which can be accomplished easily in each ANG Wing with minimal equipment and manpower.

This year is a transition year for fitness testing in the ANG. The 3-mile walk, though imperfect, will fulfill the requirement for cardiac fitness testing through the end of calendar year 2001. Although frequent runners may still elect to fulfill the cardiac fitness testing requirement with the 1.5-mile run, this office strongly discourages members who do not run this distance at least three times per week from electing the run. Preferably, walk this year and standby for the sub-maximal stress test that will be introduced hopefully later this year. Required times for passing the walk-run test this year are unchanged from previous years and may be found in AFI 40-501/ANG Supplement, October 1996. Each squadron commander should appoint a Fitness Program Manager to work with the Installation Fitness Program Administrator as you have in the past.

A new Air Force requirement this year is to practice push-ups and sit-ups, as a measure of muscular strength. The results do not count toward meeting any requirement until January 2002. This is a practice year **ONLY**. Each member should be scored on his/her performance of the crunches and push-ups and advised of the required number that he/she must perform next year in order to pass the fitness test. Instructions, with pictorial demonstration, for performing **regulation** crunches and push-ups are included with this letter as Atch 2. A chart listing the

required number of push-ups and crunches for each age group, by gender, is also provided as Atch 3.

These changes to the Fitness Program are vitally important. The goal is to promote good health and physical fitness. Enhanced readiness is a direct corollary of health and fitness. Health maintenance is a key to the ability to deploy our forces. I encourage you to make this fitness assessment a pillar of your Health Promotion/Wellness program on base. My POC for the Fitness Program is Colonel Sylvia Nye, ANG/SGO, DSN 278-8558, e-mail: [sylvia.nye@ang.af.mil](mailto:sylvia.nye@ang.af.mil).

//Signed//

RANDALL M. FALK  
Colonel, USAF, MC, CFS  
The Air Surgeon  
Chief, Medical Services, ANG

3 Attachments

1. HQ USAF/CC, dated 4 May 2000
2. Push-ups & Crunches description
3. Chart of Push-ups & Crunches numeric requirements



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, DC

MAY 4 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/FOA/DRU

FROM: HQ USAF/CC  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670


SUBJECT: Air Force Fitness Program

The Air Force is committed to enhancing the health, well being, and performance of every member. Total physical fitness includes cardiovascular capacity, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition. We currently assess cardiovascular fitness and body composition. Over the past two years we have explored expanding this assessment for Force Enhancement and to ensure compliance with DoD instructions.

Beginning in July 2000, the annual cycle ergometry test will be expanded to include muscular fitness assessments using push-ups and crunches for all Air Force members. However, pass/fail standards won't be decided until January 2002, giving AF leadership sufficient opportunity to evaluate its effectiveness. All members should receive a practice evaluation prior to 1 July 2001. Units must implement the additional procedures NLT 1 July 2000. Specific policy guidance will be issued from the Air Force Medical Operations Agency. The Health and Wellness Center staff on every installation will provide local information and training.

These changes to the AF Fitness Program are vitally important. Physical fitness remains an essential component of combat readiness and expeditionary competence. We will continue to research methods to improve the health and performance of the Force.

My POC for this program is Lt Col Regina Watson, AFMOA/SGOP, 110 Luke Avenue, Room 405, Bolling AFB, DC 20332-7050, DSN 297-4286.

  
MICHAEL E. RYAN  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

### Push-Ups and Crunches Description

#### MUSCULAR FITNESS ASSESSMENT

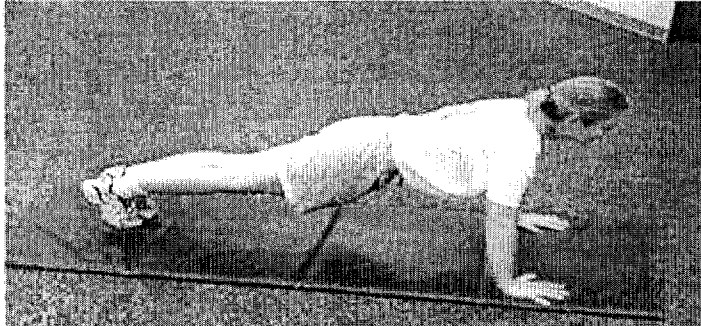
The purpose of this year is to introduce the procedures to the members and fine tune the processes before making the tests pass or fail in 2002. Here are the general procedures and format for the assessment(s). As usual the member will perform their walk/run assessment. This will always be done **FIRST!** Afterwards there is a three-minute rest period during which the Fitness Manager will read the instructions and the members will prepare for the push-up assessment. A clean flat surface will be needed with a towel, blanket or mat (if available) to place underneath you for the muscular fitness portion of the assessment.

Both men and women will perform a full push-up (as the Army and Navy do now). A full push-up begins with the member in the up position (weight supported on toes and hands, arms fully extended, the body in a straight line from the head to the ankles). To complete a push-up the member maintains the straight form (back doesn't droop or arch) and bends at the elbows until the upper arm comes parallel with the floor. The member then returns to the up position. After performing as many correct push-ups as possible in two minutes the assessment is complete. \* After doing as many push-ups as possible in two minutes the member again receives up to three minutes of rest during which the Fitness Manager reads the crunch instructions and the members prepares for the next assessment - crunches.

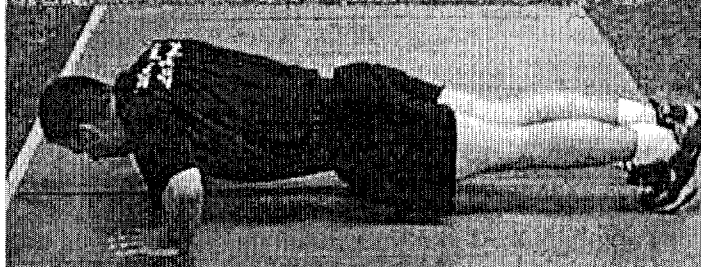
The crunch assessment will conclude the muscular fitness battery. For the crunches, the member will lie on the ground, knees bent at a 90-degree angle, and the arms crossed over the chest. The heels must stay in contact with the floor at all times. A repetition begins when the member starts from the down position (shoulder blades touching the ground) and raises the upper torso off of the ground until the elbows touch the thighs. The elbows may rise to 'reach' for the thighs, but the hands may not lose contact with the collarbone (the member cannot pull on the shirt during the test). The repetition is complete when the shoulder blades again touch the ground. This will need to be accomplished with a partner holding the ankles in place while performing this portion of the assessment.

The pictures listed below show examples of good and bad form.

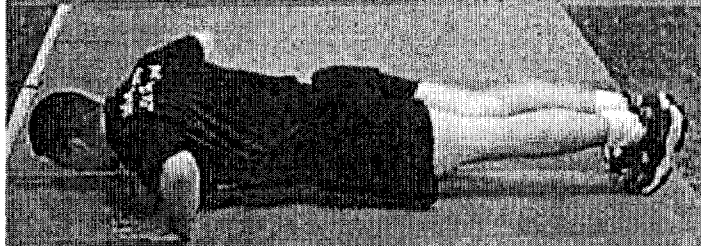
## Attachment 2



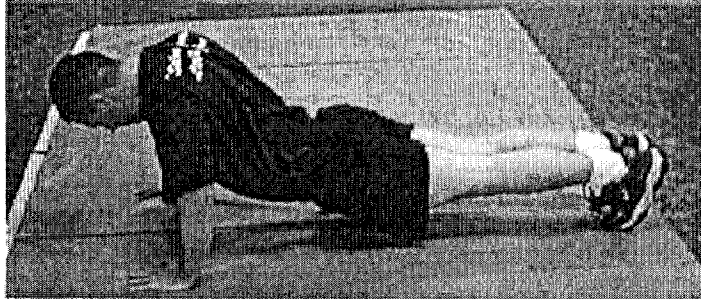
Good form, straight line from head to heels.



Not low enough. This push-up would not be counted. Upper arm must be parallel to the floor.



Good push-up. Straight line from head to heels, and upper arms are parallel to the floor.



This is fine as a resting position but not a proper push-up position.

When resting, the member must not have any part of the body on the floor besides the hands and feet.



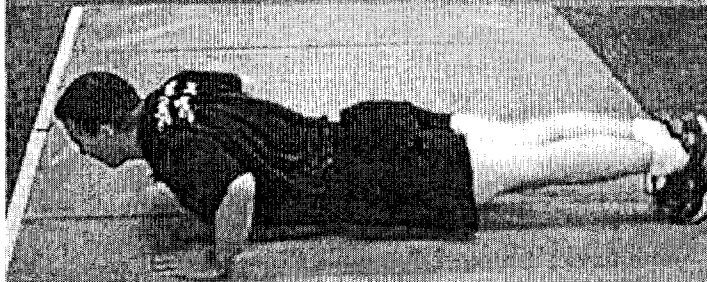
This is fine as a resting position but not a proper push-up position.

When resting, the member must not have any part of the body on the floor besides the hands and feet.

## Attachment 2



Incorrect. The arms must be parallel to the floor. The head will drop like this as the member fatigues.



Incorrect. The back is bowed, allowing the stomach to go lower than the chest. Upper arms are not quite parallel to the floor.

This typically happens when the member is doing very fast push-ups.



Member with carpal tunnel can do push-ups on their knuckles. The hands must be facing the torso as shown.



Proper use of knuckles.



Incorrect. Knees not at 90 degrees or less. Member's torso should be closer to the wall.



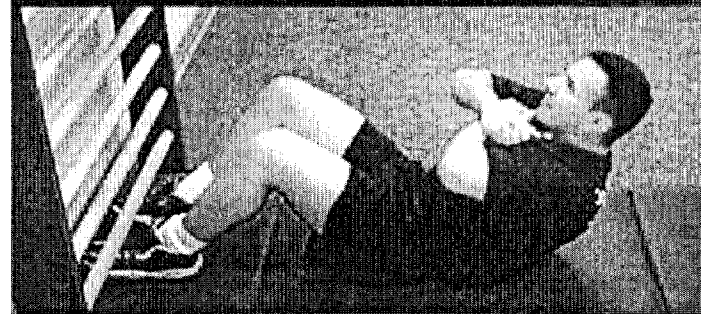


Good form, the member should touch the thighs with the elbows to complete the crunch.



Incorrect.

The member can only rest in the up position, but can not rest with elbows locked above the knees.



Incorrect.

Do not allow gripping or pulling on the shirt.

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**\*NOTE:** *An extensive literature review and consultation with a broad range of outside experts on the safety and efficacy of sit-ups/crunches was accomplished. AF found little evidence to support the commonly held notion that properly performed sit-ups are 'dangerous' for a healthy individual. However, members with a predisposition to back*

## Attachment 2

*pain/injury may be at increased risk if they perform the exercise incorrectly. If you review these procedures carefully you will see that strain on the lower back is minimized by the knees being bent at 90-degrees, and the range of motion is limited since the elbows are 'reaching' to touch the thigh/knee. Additionally, undue strain on the neck and upper back is at most slight since the hands are not pulling on the head/neck.*

As of now the assessments must be taken together as described. Members may not schedule their walk/run assessment for one month and their muscular fitness assessment(s) for another.

**Attachment 3**

<b>PUSH-UPS - MALE</b>	
<b>AGE</b>	<b>AMOUNT IN 2 MINUTES</b>
Less than 24	42
25 – 29	40
30 – 34	36
35 – 39	34
40 – 44	30
45 – 49	25
50 – 54	20
55 – 59	18

<b>PUSH-UPS – FEMALE</b>	
<b>AGE</b>	<b>AMOUNT IN 2 MINUTES</b>
Less than 24	19
25 – 29	17
30 – 34	15
35 – 39	13
40 – 44	12
45 – 49	10
50 – 54	9
55 – 59	8

<b>CRUNCHES – MALE AND FEMALE</b>	
<b>AGE</b>	<b>AMOUNT IN 2 MINUTES</b>
Less than 24	53
25 – 29	50
30 – 34	42
35 – 39	38
40 – 44	32
45 – 49	30
50 – 54	28
55 – 59	27



FROM: ANG/SG  
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Pages: 1 of 5 ☒ (Includes Cover Sheet)

Phone:

Date: 01103102

Re: LOG LTR (SG) VS ALL STATES  
LETTER

CC:

☐ Urgent

☒ For Review

☒ Please Comment

☐ Please Reply

Remarks: MH - LTR PER OUR TELECON - NOT NEW POLICY  
- PARTIAL -> CLARIFICATION. IS SE LOG LTR OR ALL STATES  
C BG BAY'S SIG APPROPRIATE? -  
Randy

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